

***Company vows to protect e-mail accounts of Chinese human rights activists, threatens to withdraw operations from China***

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47) today issued the following statement regarding news that Google experienced a significant, China-based attack intended to reveal the e-mail accounts of Chinese human rights activists. Earlier today, Google announced its intention to stop censoring its Google site in China and, possibly, shut down business operations in the country:

"In December, Google was attacked by an individual or group of individuals attempting to retrieve the e-mail accounts of Chinese human rights activists. Although Google has not explicitly accused China of initiating the attacks, the evidence strongly suggests that the Chinese Government was the perpetrator.

"This attack was a blatant, illicit attempt to access the private information of Google users who the government perceives to be a threat. If China turns out to be the perpetrator, it should be strongly condemned for its actions, which violate the internet's core principles of free speech and expression.

"At the same time, I applaud Google's decision to risk its lucrative Chinese contracts for the sake of these principles. In the past, Google and other internet providers have struggled to provide their Chinese users with a free and open forum in the face of government opposition. I sincerely hope Google's threat to sever its ties with China completely will compel not only the Chinese government but other regimes - like Vietnam - to finally expand free speech on the Web."

# # #